

Running Out of Excuses

By Anil Shrivastava 'Musafir'

Life was so simple then. We made excuses that were easily understood by our teachers without leaving any room for ambiguity. "Dog ate my homework; the alarm clock did not go off," or simply "I was sick" were short, succinct and persuasive excuses.

Times have changed. Life has become much more complex now making the past excuses antiquated. Today's excuses are as complex as modern gadgets. Present day students cannot get by using short words and short sentences. They must use enigmatic sentences and innovative phrases in order to validate their arguments. This has added additional stress to an already demanding life.

I teach classes online. Since instructions and assignments are communicated through the Internet in an asynchronous environment, traditional excuses such as, "My step mother died again (since her father-in-law kept remarrying)," are totally redundant. Today's environment demands greater ingenuity and spontaneity than ever before. Here are some excuses which have recently been used by my encumbered students:

"I am emailing you just to let you know that none of my email accounts is working"

"My dog jumped on my computer and deleted all my assignments."

"My Internet was not working, so I checked in a motel last night with my boyfriend only to find out this morning that they (motel) did not have Internet."

"My computer crashed, so I drove to my mother-in-law's place. She will not

let me use her computer until she finds an online date for herself."

"This week I am across the border in Mexico. My computer won't catch any of the American Internet sites."

"I am just letting you know that my computer has contracted a virus. Now I have to wait until the end of the flu season to submit my assignments."

"My computer crashed on me. As a result, I am hospitalized."

"My computer's software will not talk to the hardware. They need some sort of counseling I believe."

"I bought a new computer. Unfortunately, it did not come with a monitor. I am trying to teach my computer how to talk. I will not be able to submit my assignments until that happens."

"I will not be able to submit my assignment on time due to tsunami in Japan. My Internet provider's cable runs through Sea of Japan"

"My keyboard is missing a ky. C for yourself it is impossibl to typ an e."

Doing homework has changed a lot in the past 20 years but our students today don't have sufficient amount of resources available to them to keep up with the changing times. So I have decided to create a database of new excuses for pointing today's students in the right direction. If you want to help the cause, please send your suggestions to excusesunlimited@thethinkclub.com.

